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КОНФЕРЕНЦІЯ «МІЖНАРОДНИЙ
НАУКОВИЙ ФОРУМ: НАУКА І ПРАКТИКА В
СУЧАСНОМУ СВІТІ»**



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Hutsuls and Hutsulshchina

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Hutsuls [2] represent Ukrainian ethnographic group living in the Carpathians. They live in Ivano-Frankivsk region, Chernivtsi region and Transcarpathian region of Ukraine. Romanian Hutsuls called Maramures Hutsuls live in the north of Romania. Despite of all their differences from the rest of Ukrainians, Hutsuls became a nation talisman.

The origin of the name “Hutsul” has different interpretations and is still not fully determined. Some authors associate the name “Hutsul” with the word “migrate” and believe that Hutsuls had led a nomad's life. And other scientists believe that it is formed from the name of a Turkic tribe from which Hutsuls may originate.

Depending on environmental conditions and a small number of suitable arable land, sheep played a great role in the economic structure and industrial life of Hutsuls. They had also bred small and hardy horses, which are also called Hutsuls. People used them for journeys between settlements and upland meadows. Treatment of wool, leather, weaving, pottery, wood were the most common and important crafts and industrial objects.

Hutsul food was simple and very uniform, but not bad. The major products were beans, corn, potatoes, cabbage, beet, peas, milk and meat. Cheese, brynza and vurda are the main types of Hutsul cheese. They differ in color, taste, structure and technology of preparation. Brynza is a special kind of cheese made from sheep's milk, which is prepared in the valleys. True Hutsul brynza is crumbly and salty, not elastic and moist as in stores. The smoked cheese is called Budz. Budz is stored on shelves covering with sacking and its crust is like in bread - thick and brown. After cheese was removed from sour milk, all that's left is a soft cheese called vurda.

Hutsuls differed among the other Highlanders Ruthenians in a beautiful physical body-posture and free movements. Typical Hutsuls, shown on figure 1 (a, b), were

brown-haired and had light eyes. Girls also were marked with a strong physical body-posture and were mostly brown-haired. Hutsulkas were famous for their beauty and harmony. Hutsul clothing also was distinguished by elegance, many decorations and a variety of colors. Hutsuls lived in the mountains and rode horses that's why their clothes was adapted for riding.

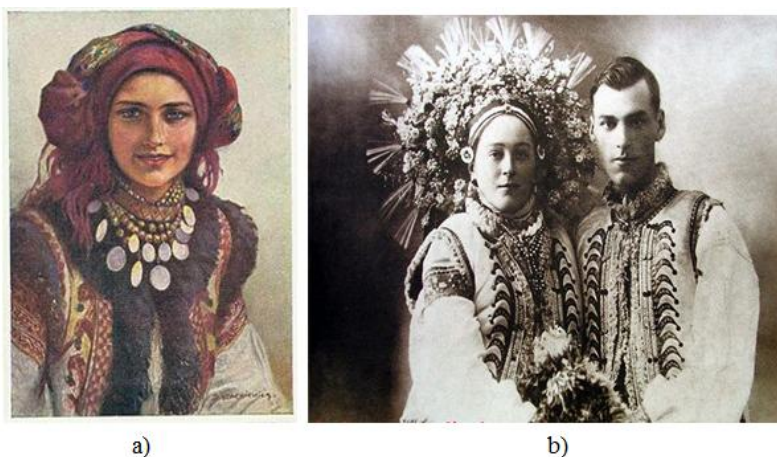


Figure 1. Typical Hutsuls

There are three main holidays in Hutsul region. They are – seeing off Hutsul shepherds to the meadows, Hutsul wedding and Christmas.

A great holiday for the local population of the Carpathians is seeing off Hutsul shepherds to the remote mountain grasslands called meadows for sheep grazing. Going out to the mountains takes place in May and lasts until September. The work lasts from dawn till night, and yet each Hutsul wants to become a polonynnyk. There are three things that characterize life of Hutsul shepherds, they are: cheese, a trembita and a fire. In the mountain valley the main shepherd lights the fire called vatra, and Hutsul boys dance ritual male dance called "Arkan" with small axes in their hands. Another shepherd treats everyone with Budz and vurda.

Hutsul wedding [1] looks like wedding in a fairytale. Even now Hutsuls maintain their traditions. They still dress traditional clothes and decorate their horses. Wedding is full of songs, dances, games, fun and jokes. Not a wedding takes place without a karavai or kalachi, embroidered or woven towels, bouquets, which are clung to guests' clothes and trees. The wedding celebrations were strictly forbidden during any fasting. The fixing of marriage was and is the tradition "to stand on the towel". According to an ancient custom [3], the best kalachi (figure 2, a) are given for

the newlyweds on embroidered towels, with the wish that their lives will be rich and beautiful. The couple is riding horses to the church (figure 2, b).



Figure 2. Kalachi (a), riding horses to the church (b)

Preparing for Christmas in Hutsul region begins in advance. Among the dishes of Holy Supper kutia takes the first place. It contains boiled wheat, honey, poppy seeds and nuts. Wheat grains are the symbol of eternity, and honey is a symbol of eternal happiness of the righteous in heaven. On Christmas Day Hutsuls visit their relatives and friends, go from village to village with verteps.

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